

WHOSE JOB IS IT? CLEANING UP & RESTORING CONTAMINATED LAND, WATER

Kerry L. Roe and Martin Emmrich

ALBUQUERQUE, New Mexico—Though government agencies that protect the nation's environment have similar goals, their actions in dealing with contaminated sites have not always been synchronized. But major federal agencies responsible for cleaning up and restoring contaminated land and water sites are working to change that.

Interior's Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance co-sponsored a May 4-6 workshop with EPA's Office of Emergency and Remedial Response to help foster a closer working relationship between federal agencies and local government natural resource trustees. The meeting here focused on the roles of EPA response personnel and local representatives in the cleanup and restoration processes under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and Oil Pollution Act.

EPA is mandated to respond to releases of contamination on land, including inland oil spills, and to clean up sites to protect human health and the environment. This does not mean that EPA cleans up sites to pre-contamination condition. The agency may contain the threat, for example, by capping the contamination with a layer of concrete and fencing off the property. Natural resource trustees, however, have authority to restore the damaged site and to obtain compensation from responsible parties for restoration activities and interim losses for diminished natural resource services. Trustees include Indian tribes, states, and the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce (NOAA), Defense, Energy, and the Interior.

Response and restoration processes should complement one another and federal law requires this coordination. EPA responds to the imminent threat to prevent further injuries, then shares the developed knowledge and data about the site with the trustees so they can fully restore their injured natural resources. In the past, however, these activities often occurred with limited communication between stakeholders. The workshop aimed to help remedy this situation and used a highly interactive learning process.

Using group exercises and open discussions, response and restoration personnel worked through examples of oil spills, chemical releases, remedial investigations, and risk assessments to learn more about the roles and responsibilities of project managers and trustees at hazardous waste sites. The format allowed those working with stakeholders on a daily basis to identify coordination benefits and find ways to improve collaboration at contaminated sites. During a role-playing exercise, participants were



At left, a field trip to two local Superfund sites concluded the second day of the workshop. One site, the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Superfund Site, is a former wood treatment site; the other, South Valley Superfund Site, is a groundwater contamination site. Below, workshop participants join a group exercise designed to highlight opportunities for enhanced coordination. Photos by Roger Lee



formed into stakeholder groups and asked to develop a work plan for a remedial investigation and risk assessment at a hypothetical hazardous waste site.

Stakeholders included the party responsible for the site, federal natural resource trustees, state trustees, tribal trustees, EPA staff, and community members. Team members were able to view the investigation and assessment processes from the perspective of another stakeholder group, understand the responsibilities and goals of each group, learn the information requirements of the processes, and identify opportunities for sharing information among stakeholder groups.

Instructors came from EPA Headquarters and regional offices, the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Texas General Land Office. Participants from Shoshone-Bannock, Navajo, Pueblo, and Washoe Tribes emphasized the significance of cultural values and stressed that sensitivity needs to be exercised when discussing culturally valued natural resources and gaining access to them.

Participants also received a reference book developed for the course that integrates environmental response and natural resource restoration material from EPA and Interior training materials. The guide allows users to easily identify opportunities for coordination throughout the processes. EPA and Interior will hold similar workshops around the country because they are a valuable tool in bringing stakeholders together to address issues in a collegial atmosphere. To learn about workshops in your area or coordination efforts at contaminated sites, contact **David Rosenberger** at david_rosenberger@ios.doi.gov or at 202-208-3801. Also see www.epa.gov/superfund/programs/nrd and www.doi.gov/oepe

END OF THE EAST BLOC CHALLENGES EUROPEAN PARKS

Connie Rudd

COLD SPRING, New York—Rapid political change in Central Europe has created major problems for the region's public land managers. Traditional legal mandates are threatened by new legislation, European managers told National Park Service experts, and people are less willing to obey regulations because they are anxious to make the most of newfound public freedom. As managers struggle to protect public lands by controlling visitor access, their actions are likened to "replacing the Iron Curtain with a Green Curtain."

Looking for ideas to help them deal with this problem and improve public land management in their rapidly changing homelands, 14 senior managers from national parks in Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic, and the Republic of Georgia sat down with NPS managers and professional staff from the Northeast Region last year. The week-long conference was conducted by the Glynwood Center, located on the historic Hudson River estate of the Perkins family.

The European participants were members of the Association of Carpathian National Parks and Protected Areas, a private, non-regulatory organization that helps to solve common problems encountered in nature conservation, especially in forest ecosystems. It also works to develop sustainable tourism and recreation. The group is grappling with the establishment of an effective park model that can be adapted to its system of parks and protected areas. It looked for help to the Countryside Exchange program, which brings together international



Nora Mitchell, left, director of the Conservation Study Institute at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, leads a class discussion at the Glynwood Center during the November 1998 conference. The NPS team also included Deirdre Gibson, program manager in the Philadelphia Support Office; Bob Krumenaker, deputy associate regional director, Northeast Region; Paul Labovitz, Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program in the Mid-West Region; Doug Morris, superintendent, Shenandoah NP; Sarah Peskin, manager of the Planning and Legislation Group, Boston Support Office; Connie Rudd, assistant superintendent, Shenandoah NP; and Russ Smith, Philadelphia Support Office.

teams of volunteer professionals to work with communities—in this case, national parks—on conservation and development issues. The Exchange also provides access to resources—new ideas, networks, and information.

Jayne Daly, director of Programming at the Glynwood Center, coordinated the course and NPS professionals made presentations, led discussions, and provided hands-on

learning experiences. The course was modeled on the eight-week International Short Course that the NPS once sponsored. The NPS team helped to build a foundation of information that the Carpathian managers can use to develop a national park concept that meets their needs in several areas: uses innovative management strategies practiced around the world; coordinates policies as a networked park system in their region; finds solutions to conservation and biodiversity problems in the evolving political and economic climate; uses advanced scientific and management tools; integrates sustainable tourism and recreation in management strategies; and develops educational tools, public-private partnerships, and community involvement.

Marie Rust, regional director for the NPS Northeast Region, summed up the effort this way: "At a time when parks face similar threats throughout the world, it is imperative that parks

managers join hands across international boundaries to exchange ideas and develop solutions to common problems. Rust commended **Sandy Walters**, deputy director of the Northeast Region, and **Kate Stevenson**, associate director of Cultural Resources, Stewardship and Partnership, for reviving the international short course.

